



**KNOW
STROKE**

KNOW THE SIGNS. ACT IN TIME.

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Stroke Strikes Fast. You Should Too. Call 911.



Know Stroke

Stroke is a leading cause of death and serious, long-term disability in adults in the United States. About 795,000 new strokes are reported in the U.S. each year. The good news is that treatments are available that can greatly reduce the damage caused by a stroke. However, you need to recognize the symptoms of a stroke and get to a hospital quickly. Getting treatment within 60 minutes can prevent disability.

WHAT IS A STROKE?



A stroke, sometimes called a “brain attack,” occurs when blood flow to the brain is interrupted. When a stroke occurs, brain cells in the immediate area begin to die because they stop getting the oxygen and nutrients they need to function.

What causes a stroke?

There are two major kinds of stroke. The first, called an ischemic stroke, is caused by a blood clot that blocks or plugs a blood vessel or artery in the brain. About 80 percent of all strokes are ischemic. The second, known as a hemorrhagic stroke, is caused by a blood vessel in the brain that breaks and bleeds into the brain. About 20 percent of strokes are hemorrhagic.

What disabilities can result from a stroke?

Although stroke is a disease of the brain, it can affect the entire body. The effects of a stroke range from mild to severe and can include paralysis, problems with thinking, problems with speaking, and emotional problems. Patients may also experience pain or numbness after a stroke.



Know the Signs

Because stroke injures the brain, you may not realize that you are having a stroke. To a bystander, someone having a stroke may just look unaware or confused. Stroke victims have the best chance if someone around them recognizes the symptoms and acts quickly.

**TROUBLE
WALKING**

**WEAKNESS
ON ONE SIDE**

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A STROKE?

The symptoms of stroke are distinct because they happen quickly:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg (especially on one side of the body)
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding speech
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

What should a bystander do?

If you believe someone is having a stroke – if he or she suddenly loses the ability to speak, or move an arm or leg on one side, or experiences facial paralysis on one side – call 911 immediately.





Act in Time

Stroke is a medical emergency. Every minute counts when someone is having a stroke. The longer blood flow is cut off to the brain, the greater the damage. Immediate treatment can save people's lives and enhance their chances for successful recovery.

WHY IS THERE A NEED TO ACT FAST?

There are several treatments for stroke. All of them are delivered on an emergency basis. Many ischemic strokes can be treated with a clot-busting drug called t-PA that is most effective within 4.5 hours of stroke onset. There are devices that can extend that window by applying the medicine directly to the clot. There are now ways to mechanically remove blood clots, but again time is of the essence. Even after waking up with a stroke, don't delay; rush to the hospital to be evaluated for treatment. Even a small stroke – a transient ischemic attack – is something to have looked at immediately.

How can I reduce my risk of stroke?

The best treatment for stroke is prevention. Several factors increase your risk of having a stroke:

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- Physical inactivity/obesity

If you smoke – quit. If you have high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, or high cholesterol, get them under control. If you are overweight, start a healthy diet and exercise regularly.

www.stroke.nih.gov
1-800-352-9424



National Institute of
Neurological Disorders
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